

From: Tucker, Jonathan
Sent: Friday, January 22, 2016 1:34 PM
To: Aldrich, Sonia
Cc: Malloy, Nathaniel; Meg Vickery; Laura Lovett
Subject: Historical Commission CPA project priorities

Sonia:

At its meeting last night, the Amherst Historical Commission voted to assign the following levels of priority and project funding to the FY17 CPA historic preservation projects:

First Priority

Amherst Historical Society Feasibility Study - \$42,500. Given the ongoing efforts at collaboration between the Historical Society and the Jones Library in association with the Library's pending expansion, this is a high near-term priority for the community.

Historic Preservation Appraisals, Surveys, and Related Studies (NEW) - \$10,000. The previous appropriation for historic preservation due diligence activities is down to \$2,950. The Commission noted the need for additional funding to support research and studies associated with current and anticipated demo delay projects, potential historic preservation acquisitions, and other ongoing historic preservation efforts.

Second Priority

Emily Dickinson Museum Fire Suppression - \$200,000. A high priority for one of Amherst's most critical historic landmarks.

Third Priority

West Cemetery Interpretive Memorial Sign (Thompson) - \$ 5,000. This is a very small request of considerable significance in terms of the continuing preservation and interpretation of West Cemetery. This project addresses the interpretive needs of the African American burial site in West Cemetery, as specifically called for in the community's West Cemetery Preservation Plan. It provides visible interpretation of an under-acknowledged aspect of Amherst's history—the contributions of Amherst's black Civil War soldiers. As an interpretive sign, this project joins numerous similar CPA-funded interpretive sign projects pursued and appropriated for years by Amherst and many other communities all over the Commonwealth. The Historical Commission respectfully disagrees with Ms. Saginor's opinion regarding the eligibility of this project, which was based in part on an abbreviated and incomplete description of the project. The Commission acknowledges Mr. Saginor's statement that he is not a legal authority in these matters (and as a result his opinions can only be advisory), and is following his advice in seeking an opinion from Town Counsel. The Commission will be providing the CPAC with additional information on this project for the hearing in February.

North Prospect/Lincoln/Sunset LHD Consultant - \$5,000. Another small request for an important purpose—to help complete the work of a citizen initiative creating a regulatory method for preserving the character of historic neighborhoods.

Fourth Priority

First Church Sprinkler System – \$200,000 recommended. This request is part of a more extensive renovation and upgrade of this historic house of worship. The Historical Commission acknowledged the historic significance of this building, but felt that the church had other resources to draw on, that this request was overly large, given limited CPA resources, and that there were higher priorities. The recommended amount also creates parity between the requests from the Dickinson Museum and First Church.

The net effect of these Historical Commission recommendations with regard to historic preservation priorities and funding recommendations is to lower the net request for FY17 CPA historic preservation funding from \$610,147 to \$462,500, a reduction of \$147,647, or nearly 25% of the original historic preservation request.

This reduction in historic preservation funding requests also has the effect of reducing the overall shortfall between available FY17 CPA funding and project funding requests. As a result of the Historical Commission's recommendations, the shortfall would shrink from a current \$346,503 down to \$198,856, a reduction of more than 42% resulting from changes in only one of the four areas of Amherst's community preservation priority.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

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